

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**  
**Judicial Council Meeting**  
**August 14, 1998**

*The Judicial Council took the following actions at its August 14 meeting:*

**Judgeship Allocation**

- Approved a revised method for allocating new judgeships among the state's trial courts based on priority of need, as recommended by the Court Profiles Advisory Committee. Under the revised methodology, trial courts are still ranked based on need. Only those trial courts that are fully coordinated, pursuant to rule 991 of the California Rules of Court, or unified in accordance with Proposition 220, would be recommended for new judgeships. The revised methodology was approved for fiscal year 1999–2000 only.
- Directed AOC staff to develop a proposed ranking methodology in consultation with the Court Profiles Advisory Committee to be presented to the council at its April 1999 meeting.

**Court Technology**

- Adopted a far-reaching Strategic Plan for Court Technology that sets priorities for high-tech efforts in the judicial branch, as recommended by the Court Technology Advisory Committee. The committee is currently developing a tactical plan that lays out specific ways of implementing objectives in the strategic plan.

The strategic plan calls for some Judicial Council forms to be processed over the Internet and for provision of electronic access to court records to the fullest extent possible. Other notable objectives of the strategic plan include:

- Defining a minimum level of court automation and providing assistance in reaching that level;
- Providing assistance in obtaining funding for information technology projects;
- Establishing a judicial branch technology center at the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to assist courts in procuring, applying, and testing new technology;
- Creating a pilot project to electronically process the various components of the record on appeal;
- Initiating a judicial branch computer network (California Judicial Network);

- Assisting trial courts in developing Web pages; and
  - Developing a secure and interactive judicial branch Intranet.
- Voted that courts are now required to develop and annually update local strategic plans that are consistent with the new master plan. Courts also are required to demonstrate that the complementary state and local plans serve as the basis for their requests to fund technology projects.

### **Trial Court Funding Allocation**

- Heard a detailed report on the anticipated allocation of the proposed fiscal year 1998–1999 budget for the trial courts from Los Angeles Municipal Court Judge Ray L. Hart, Chair of the Allocation Committee of the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC).
- Approved a series of recommendations regarding the allocation of the proposed trial court funding appropriation, as follows:
  1. Approved a TCBC recommendation that would allocate \$33.2 million to trial court security and \$4.2 million on a proportionate basis for criminal and civil case processing requests, including the technology components of those requests.
  2. Approved TCBC recommendations that the Judicial Council defer allocation of \$9.5 million in funds not previously earmarked for collection until the council's October 16 meeting to allow for further review and recommendation by the TCBC.
  3. Approved both an allocation schedule for the fiscal year 1998–1999 baseline budget for the trial courts and authority for the AOC to make minor technical adjustments to this allocation if so directed by the state Department of Finance.
- Adopted the following with regard to the balance of unallocated funds for fiscal year 1998–1999:
  1. Directed the TCBC to first address the funding needs of small courts that have few resources to manage their operations. The council noted that the clear intent of the Trial Court Funding Act of 1997 is to increase access to justice and that one of the Judicial Council's top goals is to improve the quality of justice and service to the public.

2. Directed the TCBC to address other structural inequities that exist because there were either significant underreporting problems in the 1996–1997 fiscal year, upon which the base-year funding level was determined, or other systemic issues that may have some adverse impact on county court systems.

### **Trial Court Improvement Fund**

- Approved the allocation of 2 percent (\$2.6 million) of specified criminal fine, penalty, and forfeiture revenues deposited in the Trial Court Improvement Fund to individual trial courts for court automation purposes, as recommended by the TCBC. This amount reflects one-quarter of fiscal year 1997–1998's deposits. An estimated remaining \$2.5 million will be allocated to trial courts as these revenues are received.

### **Drug Courts**

- Approved 32 drug courts as recipients of 1998–1999 mini-grant awards for the implementation and enhancement of drug courts, as recommended by the Oversight Committee for the California Drug Court Project. To allow more time to resolve technical issues, the council did not approve a dollar amount for the awards, deferring this action until October 1998 following review by the Executive and Planning Committee. A total of \$900,000 will be distributed, with a maximum grant of \$40,000 per court to allow distribution of the funds to the greatest number of courts.

### **Trial Court Coordination**

- Approved a policy recommended by the Trial Court Coordination Advisory Committee (TCCAC) that would permit counties to carry over funds from fiscal year 1997–1998 to fiscal year 1998–1999. Government Code section 77203 (Assem. Bill 233) provides that the Judicial Council may authorize a trial court system to carry over unexpended funds from one fiscal year to the next, provided that the court system has fully implemented all provisions of rule 991 of the California Rules of Court as it read on July 1, 1996.

To be eligible for such funds, counties must provide the following to the TCBC by September 1, 1998:

1. A declaration by the presiding judge(s) that the court is fully coordinated, having already fulfilled all measures listed in rule 991 of the California Rules of Court as it read on July 1, 1996 (to be certified by the TCCAC);
2. The amount not spent in fiscal year 1997–1998 that is requested to be carried over for use in fiscal year 1998–1999 (to be certified by the AOC's Finance Bureau); and

3. The intended use of the carry-over funds (to be approved by the TCBC).
- Amended the coordination assessment of Mono and San Diego Counties to “fully coordinated” and approved the *Annual Report to the Legislature on Coordination Activities for Fiscal Year 1996–1997*. Both actions were taken at the recommendation of the TCCAC.

### **Family and Juvenile Law**

- Approved a series of proposals to study existing court caseloads and practices in order to develop various models for improved court coordination of matters involving children and families, as recommended by the council’s Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. In coordination with the Task Force on Court Facilities, the committee will also study the need for and availability of family-friendly activities, the types of facilities, and their geographic proximity to each other.
- Approved a recommendation by the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee to adopt the Child Support Case Registry Form (Form 1285.92), effective October 1, 1998, contingent on the passage of Assembly Bill 2169. Section 4014 of the Family Code requires that every child support order include a provision requiring both parents to complete and deliver the form to the court. The court will forward the form to the state Department of Social Services for entry into the state registry once it is developed.